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Security Council

Fiftieth Year

Provisional

3536th Meeting
Tuesday, 16 May 1995, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Mérimée	(France)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cárdenas
	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Czech Republic	Mr. Rovenský
	Germany	Mr. Graf zu Rantzau
	Honduras	Mr. Rendón Barnica
	Indonesia	Mr. Wibisono
	Italy	Mr. Ferrarin
	Nigeria	Mr. Ayewah
	Oman	Mr. Al-Khussaiby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Rwanda	Mr. Ubalijoro
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David Hannay
	United States of America	Mr. Gnehm

Agenda

The situation in the occupied Arab territories

Letter dated 8 May 1995 from the representatives of Morocco and the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1995/366)

Letter dated 8 May 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1995/367)

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The meeting was resumed on Tuesday, 16 May 1995, at 10.55 a.m.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Mauritania in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The next speaker is the representative of Sudan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Yassin (Sudan) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I should like to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address the Security Council. Allow me at the outset to join those who have preceded me in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am confident that, with your diplomatic skills, your experience and wisdom, a just and equitable resolution will be achieved. I should also like to express our thanks to Ambassador Kovanda for his efforts in guiding the work of the Security Council last month.

We have all heard previous speakers express their condemnation, or at least their dissatisfaction, in respect of the dangers now facing the city of Jerusalem, a Holy City to all revealed religions and particularly for Islam, which considers Al-Quds Al-Sharif the second most important kiblah for Muslims and the place whence the prophet Mohammed ascended, upon whom may God's blessings fall. Jerusalem is also the cradle of Christianity.

The issue before the Security Council today is therefore one of the utmost gravity. Any failure to resolve the issue and arrive at a just solution will inflame the feelings of the Ummah and lead to fury and the mobilization of all its resources to deal with the issue.

The Security Council will be put to the test in terms of its credibility and its will and ability to adopt decisive and just resolutions. Its resolutions must uphold international law without double standards and without exception. The Security Council did adopt resolutions 252 (1968), 271 (1969), 475 (1980) and 478 (1980) and also 672 (1990), all of which relate to the issue of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. They set out Israel's responsibility — Israel, the occupying Power in the Arab lands — not to undermine the legal and demographic status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. They also call on the international community not to recognize any measures taken by the occupying Power that contravene the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Those resolutions deem such measures by the occupying Power as illegal, indeed null and void. They condemn Israel's attempts to alter the status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and call on Israel to put an end to its illegal settlement policies and measures.

The Council heard the statement by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa in which he emphasized that Israel has one objective: the indefinite annexation of East Jerusalem and the declaration of a unified Jerusalem as Israel's capital. It is attempting to achieve that objective by emptying East Jerusalem of its Palestinian inhabitants through a policy of land confiscation and placing obstacles of all kinds in the way of Palestinians' building homes.

Furthermore, Israel is continuing to build settlements and to bring in Jewish immigrants in order to entrench the policy of *fait accompli*. Israel is doing this despite the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, without fear of having the clear provisions of the Charter for such cases applied to it, provisions which the Security Council has quickly applied in other cases and without as much justification. The decision by the Council when it considered the settlements issue on 28 February last not to take any measures against Israel gave it moral support for its policy of imposing a *fait accompli*. These are the facts that must be told.

Israel would not have chosen to confiscate 53 hectares of Palestinian land — bringing the total area of Palestinian land confiscated by Israel in Al-Quds Al-Sharif since the 1967 occupation to more than 2,400 hectares — had the Security Council taken firm decisions, and implemented them, to put an end to such violations. Israel would not have built 35,000 settler units in and around Al-Quds Al-Sharif had it expected to suffer the consequences of flouting international law in general and

the binding resolutions of the Security Council in particular.

While we know full well that Israel would not have defied the international community without the unjust support and the reprehensible help it received from its allies, we must ask where is the wisdom in setting aside all the progress that has been made in the international arena in the post-cold-war period and the individual contributions of States towards peace and conciliation? Will the alliance policy remain unchanged?

The Council of the League of Arab States adopted its resolution 5487 unanimously on 6 May 1995. That resolution reaffirms that Al-Quds Al-Sharif is an indivisible part of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 and that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) apply to it. The resolution also stresses the significance of the status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif for the Arab world, both Muslim and Christian. It also condemns Israel's decision to confiscate the 53 hectares of Palestinian land because it violates international law, flies in the face of its norms, contravenes the resolutions of the Security Council and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 Relative to the Protection of Civilians Persons in Time of War, and finally because it threatens peace. In addition, the resolution calls on the international community not to recognize, under any circumstances whatsoever, any changes made by Israel — the occupying Power — to the legal and demographic status of the City of Jerusalem, and also calls on the international community to reject Israel's allegation that Jerusalem is its eternal capital.

My Government strongly condemns the measures taken by Israel in an attempt to entrench its policy of *fait accompli:* the annexation of East Jerusalem, the confiscation of land, the expulsion of Palestinians from the City and its closure against them, the construction of settlements and the continuing excavations that threaten the safety and foundations of the holy Al-Aqsa mosque.

The Government of Sudan believes that the Palestinians, by signing the Declaration of Principles, have taken a position that must be respected. We supported that position although we knew full well that Israel is not serious in wanting peace. What Israel wants is surrender, which would allow it to continue to occupy Arab lands, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. Surrender would prevent the return of Palestinian refugees to the lands from which they were dispersed by unending war and by settlement policies that have allowed Israel to seize all Palestinian territories and turn the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which are supported by the international community and include their right to create their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, into pipe dreams.

What Israel wants is the surrender of the Arab States and the international community's support for its expansionist policies. Israel is placing obstacles in the way of peace by all available means. It refuses to withdraw from the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon under the pretext of security concerns, even though it is the aggressor State and the occupying Power. What Israel wants is the international community's acquiescence to what it has tried to impose by force.

The peace that we want, a peace based on right, justice and the rule of law, is a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. Such a peace will be achieved only if Israel sets aside its expansionist ambitions and withdraws from all the occupied Arab territories; will be achieved only if Israel recognizes the legitimate and indivisible rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital; such a peace will be achieved only if Israel fully commits itself to implementing resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and also resolutions 252 (1968), 271 (1969), 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 672 (1990) relating to the status of Jerusalem.

The Security Council has a great responsibility: it must stand rock solid for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace; it must reaffirm its credibility by denouncing the measures taken by Israel to confiscate Palestinian land in and around Jerusalem, in building settlements and in continuing the excavations which threaten the foundations and safety of the holy Al-Aqsa mosque. The Council must call on Israel to rescind these measures forthwith and not to undertake any such ventures in the future. The Security Council must also reaffirm the unlawfulness of such measures. And it must act to implement the provisions of the Charter in order to ensure the full implementation of the Council's resolutions, without exception.

The international community must make public its rejection and condemnation of Israel's policies of *fait accompli*, which are in violation of international law, of resolutions that have the force of international law and of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

The Council must convince Israel that peace cannot be achieved by unilateral decisions based on the principle of the use of force.

My delegation appeals to the Security Council, and particularly to its permanent members, to heed the voice of reason in an issue of great religious sensitivity: it must take decisive action on the basis of the principles of the Charter and of international law. We believe that, if the Security Council derogates from its responsibility on the basis of unacceptable excuses, there will be an entrenchment of a serious situation that may well pull the Middle East region down into a new period of tension, with the concomitant adverse impact on international and regional peace and security.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Sudan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dorani (Djibouti) *(interpretation from French)*: I should like first of all, Sir, to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. Having worked with you and your delegation during the last two years in the Council, we know you to be a skilled and experienced diplomat whose upstanding nature, loyalty and human warmth will ensure the Council's success. I should also like to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Kovanda, for the outstanding way in which he guided the work of the Council last month.

I should like to say that my brief statement is intended to be frank and direct and will in no way try to shock anyone's sensibilities. That said, yet again the Council has before it the question of Palestine, which shows how serious the matter is. For the peace that is so ardently desired in that part of the world has unfortunately just been cast back into the balance by the regrettable behaviour of one party, namely, Israel, the occupying Power.

Forty-seven years ago, the General Assembly took a decision through its resolution 181 (II) to establish two States in Palestine under British mandate: the State of Israel and the Arab State of Palestine. The Jews living under that mandate accepted the resolution and established their own State on 14 May 1948. However, the descendants of the Canaanites, who had inhabited that land for thousands of years, namely, the indigenous populations of those regions — the Palestinians — supported by other Arab States, rejected the resolution, and rightly so: they felt wronged and usurped, and therefore refused to be content with a part of the territory. We know what happened next: destruction and misery for all the peoples of the region, in particular for the Palestinian people who, with the signing in Washington of the Declaration of Principles to some extent went back on their original decision by accepting the division of their country, which would beyond doubt enable them, sooner or later, to establish at last their own independent and democratic State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

It is now Israel's turn to wake up to existing facts and realities — facts and realities that can never now be got around. It is now Israel's turn to think hard about all the lessons of the past by formally and unambiguously accepting the division that it accepted in 1948 — to accept that same division, in other words, to accept, to the east of its own 1967 frontiers, its future neighbouring State, the State of Palestine.

One has the impression that today we are reliving the same scenario as 47 years ago, but with the important difference that there has been a kind of switch or role reversal. On the one hand, we have a people that is utterly exhausted, that has not yet come to the end of a long and painful road punctuated with destruction and massacres such as those of Deir Yassin and Sabra and Shatila, to cite but two examples; a people that, even before it had created its own State, had already recognized the State that was occupying it, and the principles of peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourliness, by accepting resolution 242 (1967); a people whose only fault, if I may so describe it, is that it aspires to live in peace in its own independent State, that is to be.

On the other hand, we have the Israeli Government — although we are sometimes told that it is not the Government but rather a very powerful and influential part of the Israeli political class — and not the people of Israel, because, fortunately, certainly not the whole population of Israel shares the points of view of its Government on problems such as expropriation and annexation, and therefore on expansion.

To judge by the facts, it would seem today that the Government of Israel has gone back on its acceptance of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), and by so doing it

denies the Palestinian people the right to live in peace within its future boundaries, implicitly recognized in that resolution. The historical irony is that this principle, contained in resolution 242 (1967) and still cherished by Israel until a short time ago, has recently been rejected by that country, to the detriment of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and in Gaza.

On Sunday the Israeli Cabinet decided not to confiscate any more Arab land. In this respect I should like to cite the statement made to the Council by the Ambassador of Israel, Mr. Yaacobi, on 28 February 1995. On the subject of settlements, he stated,

> "Immediately after the present Government of Israel was formed in July 1992, it substantially changed Israel's settlement policy ... The Government stopped allocating public resources to support the extension of existing settlements. No land has been or will be confiscated to establish new settlements." (*S/PV.3505, p. 8*)

I leave it to the Council to judge what happened afterwards.

Israel cannot have it both ways, both peace and land. The pursuit of the establishment of new settlements and acts of confiscation and expropriation of Arab land, especially in East Jerusalem and its environs, can only serve to block the peace process. Such a policy and such actions contravene international law, the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949, and the Declaration of Principles signed in Washington.

Members of the Council are aware that a widespread, generalized feeling of disenchantment, disapproval and condemnation has come over the Islamic Arab and Christian Arab world. The Council must not ignore that feeling and must respond appropriately. The Council has before it a moderate and balanced draft resolution that will no doubt contribute to calming nerves and relaunching negotiations — but this time in a spirit of sincerity. Djibouti expects that at the end of this debate the Council will adopt that draft resolution.

I should like to conclude my statement with the following very sincere remarks directed to the Ambassador of Israel.

The sons of Ishmael — one may sometimes lose sight of the fact that they are your cousins — genuinely want peace, but not just any kind of peace. They want a just and lasting peace — the peace of the brave, as General de Gaulle called it. I am sure that the sons of Isaac also want peace. To judge by facts, the Palestinian leaders — first and foremost, Chairman Arafat — unlike the Israeli leadership, have a burning desire for that peace, as they have demonstrated on many occasions.

To be sure, the people of Palestine is today weak, but it has held out its hand to the people of Israel, which is very strong and powerful. To be sure, Mr. Ambassador, you have won almost all the wars. To be sure, you are a regional Power. To be sure, you are a great force on the international stage. But allow me to remind you of what has become of peoples just as strong and civilizations just as powerful in the past. We do not know what the future might hold for us. How many weak peoples later became powerful — and vice versa?

In saying this, I should like to be perfectly clear: I wish no ill to anyone — in this case, the people of Israel. I should simply like to say that Israel must take advantage of its enormous power and not put it at the service of a policy based on expropriation, annexation and humiliation, but, rather, use it for tolerance, acceptance and good-neighbourliness. When one is strong and, above all, when one considers the future, one must comfort, assist and share with one's neighbour. The example of Europe after the Second World War is a good lesson. The prophets of Israel also taught us that lesson, and let us recall that they are our own prophets as well.

Finally, the Government of Israel must recognize one thing: without a just and lasting peace with the Palestinian people and its leadership, there will never be peace in the Middle East.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Djibouti for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Allagany (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to express to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We are confident that with your abilities and experience you will lead the Council to the desired success. I would also like to express our thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador

Karel Kovanda, for his outstanding conduct of the business of the Council last month.

Once again the Security Council is considering the question of Holy Jersualem, Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the first kiblah and the third holiest shrine, within its consideration of a whole set of questions affecting the Arab States and the territories occupied since 1967. In recent times — since the beginning of the Middle East peace process in Madrid in 1991 — we have entertained some hope for international unanimity on the basic principles for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. These principles include a full withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including Holy Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and Israel's implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), relating to its withdrawal from southern Lebanon. These resolutions also provide for the right of all States in the region to live in peace and security and the right of the Palestinian people to determine their future and their destiny.

Over the last four years we had hoped and dreamed that this region could once again enjoy prosperity and peace. We hoped that all parties would sincerely implement the commitments they undertook, especially after the signing of the Declaration of Principles between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israeli Government in Washington on 13 September 1993. We thought that would be the first step towards the establishment of a just peace between the Palestinians and Israel.

With optimism and high hopes, we expected that agreement to herald peace and prosperity, and the various stages of the agreement to proceed smoothly. But the Israeli Government has taken a number of decisions that have dashed those hopes and marred the atmosphere of the peace process; these have thwarted the creative thought and thorough analysis needed to consolidate the principles of good-neighbourliness.

We deeply regret that the Israeli authorities continue to take illegal measures to confiscate additional Palestinian land, and that it is still attempting to annex East Jerusalem and alter its legal, demographic and geographical status. These measures all clearly violate the Fourth Geneva Convention, in particular its articles 47 and 49.

Since Israel took its first steps towards the annexation of Jerusalem, the Security Council and the General Assembly have adopted many resolutions denouncing these Israeli actions and declaring them all null and void. Foremost among the Security Council resolutions are resolutions 252 (1968), 271 (1969), 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 672 (1990). In that connection we highlight resolution 478 (1980), in which the Council categorically decided not to recognize Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and called upon all States not to establish diplomatic missions to Israel at Holy Jerusalem.

Respect for Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem is not only required by international law and international legitimacy; it is a prerequisite for the continuation and the success of the Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid. There is no room for doubt that violation of such resolutions, particularly those relating to Holy Jerusalem, will cause the untimely end of that peace process.

Along with its sister Arab States, Saudi Arabia has supported the peace process in order to bring about its success and to enable the Palestinian self-rule authorities to consolidate their footing and move the peace process forward. The representatives of the international community, the Security Council and the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, must shoulder their responsibility to convince Israel to rescind its illegal actions with respect to the confiscation of Arab land in Holy Jerusalem and to commit itself, completely and sincerely, to the success of the peace process. Silence by the Security Council and the international community at large on these actions would once again raise questions about the Council's credibility and about the international criteria on which values of justice, right and peace are based.

One of the provisions of the Declaration of Principles signed by the PLO and Israel states that talks on Holy Jerusalem should begin no later than the third year of the interim period. The two parties agreed that four questions would be negotiated next year when the final status negotiations had begun: Jerusalem; settlements; refugees; and boundaries. It is our understanding that the Declaration of Principles commits both parties to taking no step that could impede those negotiations. We wonder whether Israel's understanding differs from ours.

The Arab and Islamic worlds expect the Security Council once again to reaffirm Arab and Islamic rights to Jerusalem. They call upon the Council to declare illegal these Israeli decisions and actions. They expect it to make Israel cease its plans and programmes for

settlements in the occupied Arab territories. The Security Council has the power today to salvage the Middle East peace process. It has the power to stop Israel from persisting in these policies and practices.

We hope that the Council will shoulder its responsibility to restore legitimate Arab and Islamic rights, and that the Middle East, along with other regions, will enjoy prosperity, stability and peace.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am confident that your wide experience and your wisdom will enable you to steer the Council towards shouldering its important responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security.

Nor can I fail to express my deep thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Kovanda, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, for his wise leadership of the Security Council last month.

The Security Council is meeting to consider an important issue which has repeatedly been placed before it in the past: the violation by the Israelis of resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, in this instance by confiscating 53 hectares of Palestinian Arab land in East Jerusalem in order to build more Israeli settlements, as a part of their continued attempts to Judaize the Holy City and to alter its demographic composition. By taking this step, the Israelis have proved once again that they do not respect international legality, and never comply with any United Nations resolutions.

The international community on more than one occasion has opposed measures taken by the Israelis to annex the Holy City of Al-Quds and to change its legal status, geographic features and demographic composition. The Council itself has adopted several resolutions on this question, perhaps the most important among them being resolution 478 (1980), in which the Security Council expressed its concern over the enactment of the "basic law" which proclaimed changes in the characteristics and status of the Holy City, and in the strongest possible terms censured that law and the refusal by the Israelis to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions.

In resolution 478 (1980) the Security Council affirmed that the "basic law" was a violation of international law, and determined that all the legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by the Israeli occupying Power were null and void and should be rescinded forthwith, because such measures and actions constituted a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Security Council also called on all States that had established diplomatic missions in Al-Quds to withdraw them.

What happened following the adoption of that resolution? The Israelis continued their defiance of Security Council resolutions and persisted in their actions aimed at the Judaization of the Holy City. They also continued their excavations designed to undermine the Al-Aqsa mosque, having failed to burn it down in 1969. They also persisted in placing obstacles in the way of Palestinian Arabs living in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, to force them to leave the city - sometimes by sealing it off from the rest of the cities of Palestine, and at other times by inciting fanatic settlers to perpetrate repeated attacks against Palestinian Arabs.

Even the recent developments, the so-called Peace Agreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians, have not prevented the Israelis from continuing their violations of Security Council resolutions and encroaching upon the rights of the Palestinian people - rights which have been confirmed and supported by international legality. And here we have to ask: Until what point will the Israelis continue to refuse to implement the resolutions of the Security Council and the international community? And do the Israelis really want peace?

The question being considered by the Security Council today is an extremely important and serious one, because Al-Quds Al-Sharif is the key to war and peace now as it was in the past and as it will be in the future. The question, this time, does not concern only Arab Governments that Israel's allies could exert pressure on and contain. It is a matter that goes beyond Arab Governments and touches the very sensibilities of all the peoples of the Arab nation, from the Ocean to the Gulf. It also is a matter of concern for the peoples of the Islamic nation as a whole. No attempt to contain the

reaction of angry peoples will ever succeed. Moreover, this development will fuel more extremism in the region, the very extremism whose original motivation was the actions of the Israelis and their allies.

The patience of the Arab people and the peoples of the Islamic nation is running out, as they witness every day Israeli arrogance and Israeli persistence in humiliating the Arabs and Muslims, in defiance of all the resolutions of the Security Council, because the Israelis are exempt from implementing those resolutions thanks to the biased position of the United States of America. This even encourages the Israelis to continue to perpetrate their violations and their expansion, by force, at the expense of their neighbours.

The Israelis are exempt from being subjected to Chapter VII of the Charter, notwithstanding the fact that all their terrorist actions against the Palestinian people fall under Chapter VII of the Charter. Arabs and Muslims ask: Why has the Security Council been unable to force the Israelis to comply with its numerous resolutions? And why does the Security Council avoid the application of Chapter VII to the Israelis? Furthermore, why does the Security Council turn a blind eye to the atrocious Israeli massacres of Palestinian Arabs and then turn around and raise hell when a Jewish settler in Palestine is slightly injured? Arabs and Muslims also ask: Why does a super-Power, a permanent member of the Security Council, encourage and even incite the Israelis to refuse to abide by the resolutions of the Security Council? Does this not show a stark contradiction between its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council and its actions when it comes to the Israelis? Would not such a position give several countries justification for not complying with Security Council resolutions - including my own country, which is being subjected to unjust sanctions imposed by the Security Council, under Chapter VII, on the mere suspicion of the involvement of two Libyan citizens in the explosion of an American aircraft? Worse still, it is the United States that is impeding any settlement of a legal dispute which should have never been put before the Security Council in the first place, because it does not constitute any threat to international peace and security.

The policy of humiliation and double standards in international issues is very regrettable, because it is being applied by the Security Council and by a super-Power that is a permanent member of the Council. This cannot go on; it cannot be condoned indefinitely because it agitates peoples and drives them to seek every means possible to rid themselves of the injustice. It might even drive them to reconsider the very usefulness of a United Nations that has lost its credibility in the field of protecting peoples and their rights and sovereignty.

Today, the Security Council has before it an extremely sensitive question. The Arab world and the Islamic world and all peoples dedicated to the prevalence of peace and security in the Middle East are looking to the Council. So either it can adopt a decisive resolution that would put an end to illegal Israeli actions which undermine faith in a lasting, just and comprehensive peace in the region, or it can push the peoples of the area to choose the road of confrontation and extremism, which might well draw the region once again into a bloody conflict that would threaten international peace and security.

Everything will depend on the decisions and practical measures the Security Council takes regarding Israeli policies designed to nibble at and ultimately Judaize Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania)(*interpretation from French*): I wish first, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May 1995. I am sure that your experience and skill will ensure the success of the Council's deliberations. My confidence in you is made even stronger by the important role that France, this friendly country, is playing in the maintenance of international peace and security.

I take this opportunity also to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, His Excellency Mr. Karel Kovanda, on the efficient and skilful way in which he guided the Council's work in April.

As is known, the political decision of the Arab States to begin negotiations with Israel was a decision based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1969) and 338 (1973) and on the principle of land for peace.

The decision of the Government of Israel to begin negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization

(PLO) and the signature of the Declaration of Principles by the two parties strengthened confidence in the peace process.

But now the Council is meeting today in the wake of the recent decision by the Government of Israel to confiscate 53 hectares of Palestinian land in occupied East Jerusalem. This action, which has aroused almost universal disapproval and has had a negative impact on the fragile peace process in the Middle East, is a blatant and flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, United Nations resolutions and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed on 13 September 1993. What is more, the decision runs counter to the norms of international conduct, the United Nations Charter and the rules and principles of international law. Far from promoting the emergence of a climate of confidence in the difficult negotiations now under way, it is yet another obstacle on the path towards an overall settlement of the question of the Middle East.

That is why the Islamic Republic of Mauritania — as many other countries have already done — strongly condemns the Israeli decision, which aspires to present the international community with a *fait accompli* and, by so doing, continues to turn a blind eye to the feelings and aspirations of the immense majority of the world's peoples.

True, there has been a great deal of progress since the Madrid Peace Conference over three years ago. Negotiation and respect for the norms and principles of international law were in the process of ousting the tension and violence the peoples of the Middle East had suffered under for so long. But today the peace process is at a critical stage: the Security Council must take urgent steps to address these serious violations of international law. Progress in, indeed the success of the peace process depend to a large extent on the political will and the commitment of the two parties to fulfil the undertakings they have put their names to. Unilateral actions such as the one that brings us here today cannot but arouse suspicion and doubt, and undermine the aspirations of the peoples of the region for peace and concord.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Mauritania for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.